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ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER
OF HEALTH
TO THE
HARPENDEN
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL
FOR THE YEAR 1937



HARPENDEN
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ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1937

TO THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
HARPENDEN URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the Report for the year 1937,
as the Medical Officer of Health for the District. I
have to thank the Sanitary Inspector and his Staff for
their advice and assistance.

Yours faithfully,

HUGH FRASER, M.A., M.B., C.M.

OFFICERS OF COUNCIL
ENGAGED IN PUBLIC HEALTH WORK

Clerk:

MR. C. S. TUCKEY

Telephone 800

Deputy Clerk:

MR. F. A. HARRIS

Telephone 800

Sanitary Inspector and Surveyor (whole time):

MR. W. H. JOHNSON, ASSOC.M.INST.C.E.

Telephone 134

Inspector and Surveyor's Asst. (whole time):

MR. D. E. WESTON

Manager Sewage Disposal Works:

MR. T. SPACEY (Junr.)

Telephone 983

Medical Officer of Health:

HUGH FRASER, M.A., M.B., C.M.

Telephone 29

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (acres) ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,126
Population (census 1931) ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8,349
Population estimated, June, 1937 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11,270
Number of inhabited houses, December, 1937 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3,227
Number of persons per inhabited house (census)	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.8
Rateable value, June ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£113,525
Sum represented by a penny rate, June ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	£437

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR
THE YEAR.

			TOTAL	M.	F.			
Births ...	{	Legitimate	146	69	77	}	Birth Rate ...	13.6
		Illegitimate	8	5	3			
Deaths ...	...	...	117	53	64	Death Rate ...	10.0	

Number of women dying in, or in consequence of, child-birth :—

From sepsis ... 0

From other causes ... 0

Deaths of Infants under one year per 1,000 births :—

Legitimate, 4 ; Illegitimate, 0. Total Rate ... 25

There were 3 still births

Deaths from Measles (all ages) ... 0

„ Whooping Cough (all ages) ... 0

„ Diarrhœa (under 2 years of age) ... 0

CAUSES OF DEATH.

							M.	F.
All Causes	...	...	...	...	...	...	53	64
1	Typhoid and Paratyphoid Fevers	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
2	Measles	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
3	Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
4	Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
5	Diphtheria	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
6	Influenza	...	...	...	...	...	4	2
7	Encephalitis Lethargica	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
8	Cerebro-spinal Fever	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
9	Tuberculosis of Respiratory System	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
10	Other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
11	Syphilis	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
12	General Paralysis of the Insane, Tabes Dorsalis	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
13	Cancer, Malignant Disease...	...	...	...	...	...	10	13
14	Diabetes	...	...	...	...	...	2	3
15	Cerebral Hæmorrhage, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	2	1
16	Heart Disease	...	...	...	...	...	13	18
17	Aneurysm	...	...	...	...	...	1	—
18	Other Circulatory Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	6	3
19	Bronchitis	...	...	...	...	...	1	2
20	Pneumonia (all forms)	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
21	Other Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
22	Peptic ulcer	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
23	Diarrhœa, etc. (under 2 years)	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
24	Appendicitis	...	...	...	...	...	1	1
25	Cirrhosis of Liver	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
26	Other Diseases of Liver, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
27	Other Digestive Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	2	3
28	Acute and Chronic Nephritis	...	...	...	...	...	—	3
29	Puerperal Sepsis	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
30	Other Puerperal Causes	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
31	Congenital Debility, Premature Birth, Malforma- tions, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	—	2

							M.	F.
32	Senility	...	...	...	...	...	—	1
33	Suicide	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
34	Other Violence	...	...	...	...	...	3	2
35	Other Defined Diseases	...	...	...	...	...	6	7
36	Causes Ill-defined or unknown	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
Special Causes (included in No. 35 above) :								
	Small-pox	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
	Poliomyelitis	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
	Polioencephalitis	...	...	...	...	...	—	—
	Deaths of infants under 1 year...	...	...	...	...	...	1	3

Table showing the comparative figures of this district with the provisional figures of the Registrar-General for England and Wales :—

			Birth Rate.	Infant Mortality Rate.	Death Rate.
Harpenden U.D.	...	...	13.6	25	10.0
England and Wales	...	...	14.9	—	12.4

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES DURING THE YEAR.

Diseases	Total Cases notified	Cases admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Small Pox	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	22	20	—
Diphtheria	7	7	—
Enteric Fever (including Para- typhoid)	1	1	—
Puerperal Fever	1	—	—
Pneumonia	4	—	—
Other diseases generally notifiable. (Specify disease) Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—
Encephalitis lethargica	—	—	—
Other diseases notifiable locally. (Specify disease)	—	—	—
Chicken-pox	20	—	—
Erysipelas	1	—	—

TUBERCULOSIS.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10	1	—	2	1	—	—	—	—
15	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
20	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—
35	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
65 and upwards ..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Totals ..	1	1	3	3	—	1	—	—

Ophthalmia Neonatorium	Cases			Vision unim- paired	Vision im- paired	Total Blind- ness	Deaths
	Notified	Treated					
		At Home	In H'spit'l				
	0	—	—	—	—	—	—

SUMMARY (for reference) OF NURSING ARRANGEMENTS,
HOSPITALS, AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS AVAILABLE FOR
THE DISTRICT.

PROFESSIONAL NURSING IN THE HOME.

(a) GENERAL. In this district the duty is taken up by the Harpenden Nursing Centre developed as a War Memorial, with premises commodious and convenient. The funds are provided practically by voluntary subscriptions. Small contributions are made by the Herts County Council and the London County Council. A contribution is now made by the Local Authority.

There are five nurses in residence. Of these, three—the sister-in-charge and two nurses—take care of in-patients. For professional nursing in the home, two nurses are employed—one as a midwife and the other for general nursing and school work. There is an electrical and massage department provided with ultra-violet apparatus under the care of a skilled nurse.

(b) FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES, *e.g.*, MEASLES. In epidemics in the past the Council has engaged special nurses *ad hoc*.

MIDWIVES. The Council does not employ nor does it subsidize midwives practising in the district.

CLINIC AND TREATMENT CENTRES. The Maternity and Child Welfare Centre (Consultation and Treatment) is the Harpenden Nursing Centre, Luton Road. Here, also, are provided the school clinics for dental work and ophthalmic cases. There is excellent accommodation. Tuberculosis treatment is carried on by the County Council, which also makes arrangements with various general hospitals for the treatment of venereal diseases.

HOSPITALS USED BY THE INHABITANTS.

(a) GENERAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL.

(1) WEST HERTS HOSPITAL, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD—Telephone Boxmoor 612—110 beds. Matron, Miss Fields. Supported by voluntary contributors, endowments and fees from patients. A general hospital for accidents and surgical cases. Surgical maternity cases are also admitted. There is an ear, throat and nose department, and an up-to-date X-Ray equipment. There is a staff of physicians and surgeons, including ear, throat and nose, ophthalmic and orthopaedic specialists. Non-pulmonary cases of tuberculosis are admitted.

(2) ST. ALBANS AND MID HERTS HOSPITAL.—Telephone St. Albans 268—50 beds. Matron, Miss D. Mason. Supported by endowments, voluntary contributors and fees from patients. A general hospital for accident, medical and surgical cases with an X-Ray Plant. There are eight Hon. Medical Officers and a Resident House Surgeon.

(3) OSTER HOUSE, ST. ALBANS—192 beds. The property of the Guardians for the St. Albans Area, which comprises St. Albans Urban, St. Albans Rural and Harpenden Urban Districts.

Medical Officer, Dr. Hope Simpson (non-resident).

Deputy Medical Officer, Dr. Jameson.

(b) INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

(1) THE SISTERS HOSPITAL, ST. ALBANS.—Telephone St. Albans 259. This is maintained jointly by the Councils of St. Albans City, St. Albans Rural and Harpenden Urban. There is a Scarlet Fever block of 24 beds over which are 2 wards of 4 beds, each reserved for Cerebro Spinal Fever. There is a Diphtheria block containing 12 beds. The hospital is supplied with a Thresh's Steam Disinfector. A motor ambulance is kept at the hospital.

The above refers to conditions prevailing during the period covered by this report. Since then the new Hospital has been completed and occupied in June 1938.

The new buildings afford accommodation for 22 Scarlet Fever beds and 22 Diphtheria beds. In addition, there is an observation cubicle ward with 10 beds.

The old buildings are being renovated and brought up-to-date, and will provide 31 additional beds, making a total of 85 beds in all. Provision has been made for further extension when necessary. There is a new and up-to-date steam disinfector

(2) CHERRY TREE HOSPITAL, near REDBOURN, for Small-pox ; accommodation 16 beds. There is also an emergency tent.

Caretakers, Mr. and Mrs. Warby.

TUBERCULOSIS. Cases are attended to by the County.

MATERNITY. Cases are admitted to the Harpenden Nursing Centre. Surgical cases to the St. Albans Hospital and the West Herts Hospital.

Enteric Fever cases are now admitted to the Sisters Hospital if there is accommodation, and failing that, to the St. Albans Hospital.

There is no institutional provision for unmarried mothers, illegitimate infants, and homeless children in the district.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES. (a) FOR INFECTIOUS CASES. A motor ambulance is available at the Sisters Hospital, St. Albans, very promptly on receipt of a telephone message.

(b) FOR NON-INFECTIOUS AND ACCIDENT CASES a motor ambulance has been purchased and is now being used.

In the case of accidents, an arrangement has been made with Miss Debenham, 12 Clarence Road, for the provision of a nurse to attend with the ambulance. Cases are taken first to the Nursing Centre if necessary.

An ambulance to the West Herts Hospital, Hemel Hempstead, is provided by the authorities mainly using that Hospital.

LABORATORY WORK.

The Council has a contract with the Herts County Mental Hospital, Hill End, St. Albans, for bacteriological examinations. Numerous throat swabs and specimens of sputum were examined and reported upon.

Diphtheria Antitoxin is provided in necessitous cases.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNIZATION

In February a scheme for immunization of children against Diphtheria was initiated. The Council supplies the necessary vaccine; the work is carried out by the local medical practitioners free to children of the elementary school class—the only condition being that a negative Schick test taken 2 or 3 months after the inoculation is supplied.

Unfortunately only 37 children have been immunized—a very poor response. It is of no use during an actual outbreak of diphtheria, unlike the use of antitoxin which is immediate and transient.

Active immunity requires several weeks or months for its development but endures for years.

SANITARY ADMINISTRATION.

List of adoptive Acts, Bylaws, and Regulations in force in the District, with dates of adoption :—

(a) Adoptive Acts in force :—

Infectious Disease Prevention Act, 1890	} 1898
Public Health Acts (Amendment Act, 1890) Part III	
Majority of the adoptive parts of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1907. 26th Oct., 1909.	

(b) Bylaws (approved 15th Aug., 1929):—

New Streets and Buildings.
 Drainage of Existing Buildings. 18th Aug., 1930.
 Prevention of Nuisances.
 Slaughterhouses.

Means of Escape in case of Fire.

Houses let in Lodgings.

Common Lodging Houses } 31st Aug., 1900.
Tents, Vans, Sheds, etc. }

Offensive Trades.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops Regulations.

The work of Sanitary Administration is carried on mainly through the Public Health Committee, which meets once a month.

SCAVENGING. House refuse is now collected by a low loading covered motor vehicle. The house refuse is collected from all the houses in the Urban District once a week, and disposed of on a tip. The tip is used in accordance with the recommendations of the Minister of Health, the refuse being deposited in layers and covered with earth.

WATER SUPPLY. This is from deep borings in the chalk and is supplied by the Harpenden Water Company.

The supply is adequate in quantity and quality. Chemical and bacteriological examinations are frequently made and have been carried out for some months every month. The latest report, like previous ones, states that this is a hard water of good organic purity, in very satisfactory condition and quite suitable for use for dietetic purposes.

Sanitary Inspection of the District:—1937.

Houses inspected in routine	...	...	...	...	...	45
„ „ on complaint	...	...	...	...	...	17
„ „ after infectious disease	...	...	...	...	...	29
Visits to Schools and Institutions	...	...	...	...	...	3
Inspections of Bakehouses	...	...	...	...	...	9
„ Laundries	...	...	...	...	...	12
„ Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	...	55
„ Cowsheds and Dairies	...	...	...	...	...	23
„ Factories and Workshops	...	...	...	...	...	22
Privies abolished	...	...	...	...	...	0
Privies and pail closets converted to water closets	...	...	...	...	...	0
Premises connected to sewers (total)	...	...	...	...	...	142
Yards paved or paving repaired	...	...	...	...	...	1
New dustbins provided	...	...	...	...	...	7
Premises disinfected	...	...	...	...	...	32
Cases of overcrowding abated	...	...	...	...	...	0

Premises repaired, roofs, ceilings, walls, etc., and cleansed ...	7
Nuisances from dampness abated	3
Nuisances from animals, pigs, fowls, etc., abated	2
Cesspools abolished	2
Sample of water analysed	0
Premises condemned	0
Notices served (statutory)	0
„ „ (preliminary)	0
Samples of milk analysed for Certified licence	6
„ „ „ „ „T.T.” licence	5
„ „ „ „ Accredited	5
Meat condemned as unfit for human consumption	0
Cesspools emptied	88
Shops inspected under 1934 Shops Act	3
Hairdressers	6

HOUSING.

(a) STATISTICS.

Number of new houses erected during the year :—

(a) Total	120
(b) By Local Authority	0

1. *Unfit dwelling-houses.*

Inspection—(1) <i>a</i> Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	79
(1) <i>b</i> Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	96
(2) <i>a</i> Number of dwelling-houses which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Act, 1935 ...	17
(2) <i>b</i> Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	27
(1) The number of houses which on inspection were considered to be unfit for human habitation... ..	7
(2) The number of houses the defects in which were remedied in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	7
(3) The number of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to (<i>a</i>) the serving of notices requiring the execution of works or (<i>b</i>) the making of demolition or closing orders	2

(4) The number of notices served requiring the execution of works	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
(5) The number of houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
(6) The number of demolition or closing orders made							2
(7) The number of houses in respect of which an undertaking was accepted under subsection (3) of Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936	...	...	...	...	...	...	0
(8) The number of houses demolished	...	...	...	...	...	...	0

2. *Housing Act, 1935.*

Number of Inspections made under the Act for Overcrowding Survey	731
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(b) HOUSING CONDITIONS.

The District is mainly residential being practically a suburb of London and Luton. There are no areas which can be defined as clearance areas requiring demolition and no improvement areas as defined by the Housing Act, 1936.

On April 1st, 1935, the area of the Urban District was added to by the inclusion of certain parts of the St. Albans Rural District, including Batford, and increased from 1,631 to 3,126 acres.

A scheme for duplicating the existing main sewer and extending the sewers to drain the areas added to the Urban District from the St. Albans Rural District has been prepared by the Surveyor, and a contract accepted by the Council for their construction. The work should be completed by the end of 1938.

The whole of the Urban District will then be catered for with the exception of isolated property.

142 more premises were connected with the sewers during the year, making a total of 2,765.

The total quantity of sewage treated at the Sewage Works was 116,932,390 gallons, compared with 99,372,260 gallons in 1936.

The Rainfall was 35.392 compared with 27.322 in 1936.

At the end of the year there were 4 registered Slaughter Houses, 10 Butchers' Shops, 7 registered Dairies, 3 registered Cowkeepers and 31 registered Retailers of Milk, 13 Licenced Slaughtermen.

